

March District Councillor Address

### **Covid 19 Update**

Good progress in the Covid-19 vaccination continues to be made. Since concerns raised by residents at the start of the year an effective weekly dialogue continues between CDC and NHS Sussex with improved communication channels. It appears that those within the 40 years bracket will start to get their vaccinations by the end of March. If there are any concerns or questions with the vaccination rollout please do raise these with me.

### **Holding Southern Water to account update**

You will remember that last year my group brought forward a successful motion for the CEO of CDC to write to Southern Water and OFWAT regarding water capacity issues. A holding letter was received prior to the Christmas and a fuller response was received on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February. The responses have been circulated to all Parish Councils and I am happy to take any comments back to CDC

### **The Local Plan**

This will be discussed at Cabinet and Full Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March and I hope that I will then be permitted to share more information with the parishes I represent then. Local Plan Review

CDC have also informed me that they have developed a detailed communications strategy and plan for the Local Plan Review. As part of our communication activities members will be receiving a regular email newsletter.

### **The Conduct of Council Business**

The Council agreed at the last full Council meeting, once COVID-19 is over / under control, to consider the organisation of the Council including looking at introducing a 'hybrid' Cabinet and Committee system. This would retain the formal structure and advantages of a Cabinet model of government while strengthening the role of non-Cabinet members (backbenchers and opposition) to provide greater oversight, accountability and consensus working.

### **CDC Climate Action Plan Approved**

At the Council's January meeting, the Climate Action Plan was approved. This is an incredibly important milestone for the Council and personally for the opposition to get CDC first to employ a Climate Emergency Officer (who must be given a huge amount of credit for putting together such a comprehensive document) and then to develop policy accordingly.

The role of the Citizens' Assembly was discussed, and it was reinforced that their aims are to improve awareness and build consensus in support of actions that will

need to be taken by the Council and by us all as individuals. It is not something that harms democratic accountability (quite the opposite) and there have been scores of successful such assemblies around the country by now.

### **Update on Covid Grants**

The Covid Recovery Grants scheme was launched on the 20 August 2020 and they have now closed the grant as CDC have fulfilled the full grant amount. CDC have received a total of 92 applications for the large business grant. A total of 67 applications have been successful which totals a grant amount of £279,946.18 and an equivalent amount of investment by the business community. Of these 67 applications, 22 of the businesses have completed their projects and have been paid. There are four applications that have successfully passed through the first two stages of checking and will be going to panel. The grant amount for this if all successful will be £16,018.67. CDC have received a total of 155 applications for the small business grant. A total of 116 businesses have already received their small grant which totals to £100,435.74. CDC have three applications ready to be signed off totalling a grant amount of £2,733.27.

### **Lagoon 3**

You might have heard that the owners of Crouchland farm have agreed to release the charge they hold over Lagoon 3 so that it can be sold to a third party and cleared up. I am delighted with this news (if it happens) as it paves the way for the lagoon to be cleared up and the potential environmental disaster avoided. This is good news for the community and good news for the environment.

I will however continue to monitor closely the situation and following this up with the relevant authorities to make sure that they will seek assurances from any new owner that they will clean up the lagoon before the deadline expires for the existing planning enforcement notice. In other words, until I am sure that there is nothing left posing a danger to our environment or the communities that I represent.

A meeting that I organised took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> February at 4.00pm which included officers, the cabinet member for Planning and Parish Councillors from Kirdford and Plaistow and Ifold. This was a positive meeting as it was confirmed a multi agency visit (including fire services who have not attended the last two meetings) would take place on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February with a report due in two to four weeks time which will highlight subsequent changes to the plan. I also was pleased that having asked many times for this there was a commitment to sample the lagoon to inspect the contents. We also were informed that the charge lies on the land and so regardless of who owns the land the May 2021 deadline remains.

I also have commitment from CDC that they will meet regularly with the members at the most recent meeting and I have requested that these be minuted going forward.

In addition I also wrote to Gillian Keagan MP as she wrote on her social media blog regarding a positive meeting with the EA regarding Lagoon 3 and since this had not been fed back I hoped she could elaborate on this. To date I have not received a reply.

### **Loxwood Claypit**

I continue to attend meetings with the local campaign group in order to be kept informed of developments with this planning application as and when it goes in.

### **Full Council Meeting**

The full council meeting on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March has a very full agenda and it was not possible to complete all items. The roll over meeting (if required) is Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 9.00am and will conclude the agenda. The local plan is top of this agenda item.

### **Surgery**

As always please contact me with any issue, feedback, problem or question and I will do my best to help: [gbevans@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:gbevans@chichester.gov.uk) / 07958 918056. Although I have not been able to resume normal Saturday surgeries yet, I am available to meet and visit residents (whilst observing social distance measures) or for online meetings or surgeries upon request. I look forward to hearing from you!